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EDITORIAL

Early last spring there came to the *English Journal* office a very brightly written and moving appeal that the National Council should take the lead in the formation of a committee "From Kindergarten through University" to standardize instruction in English in the elementary school. As the College Entrance Board once took the high schools in hand in order to insure itself a reasonably homogeneous student supply, so the high schools should now take the situation in hand, calling in a few elementary teachers for counsel, and issue a course of study for the elementary schools. The proposal is almost fatally attractive. Teachers in the upper grades and the high schools have been constantly annoyed because pupils did not know what they had supposedly been taught. If they had only learned to speak in sentences, to use the proper forms of verbs and pronouns, what a delightful time we should have in teaching them to say the right thing and to secure some elegance and vigor of expression. Yet you will remember that the *English Journal* has never published that appeal.

The program suggested is entirely undesirable. It would fail for exactly the reasons that the college domination of the high schools by means of the entrance examination has failed. The elementary schools probably could not do what would be asked of them. At any rate, it is morally certain that they would not, and that the secondary schools would find themselves compelled to take what was offered just as they do now. This is precisely the position in which the colleges have found themselves. It is not the speeches defying the Entrance Examination Board which have proved effective; it is the silent persistence of the high schools in training their pupils for the prospective needs of the majority. The colleges must have students and must therefore take the high-school graduates as they are. So the high schools will always have to take the elementary-school graduates as they are.

There is, however, something that can well be done about this matter. Each high school may call a conference of the elementary schools contributing to it, and through this conference secure both the formulation of a practicable program for the elementary school and the unreserved approval of that program by the teachers who are to carry it out.

This procedure is becoming increasingly popular, and deserves to become universal. In most cases the elementary teachers feel at first that they have been called in to be dictated to, but they shortly realize that they are being asked to decide what ground they can cover effectively. They are agreeably surprised to find that the secondary-school teachers will be satisfied with less than the grades now attempt to teach—that, in fact, they are very ready to accept what the elementary teachers find they can and should give. Having made this discovery, they enter into the discussions eagerly, and zealously apply in their own schools the decisions reached. Wherever the plan has been tried it has proved immensely helpful.

Such a movement will ultimately give us, as numerous local courses of this kind are collated, a really usable elementary-school curriculum. At the same time will emerge a high-school course of study continuous with that of the elementary school, and perfectly practicable, because it will assume in the incoming students only that training which they have actually had. Finally, the colleges, knowing the foundation upon which they are to build, will revise their syllabi. We shall then be delivered from the curse of paper courses and have a continuous curriculum “from the kindergarten through university.”